



NEWS RELEASE

Today's Date: April 20, 2009
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BOAT REMOVAL AT SAN MATEO-HAYWARD BRIDGE ALMOST COMPLETE; CONTRACTOR WILL RETURN TONIGHT

Hayward - Caltrans, the Coast Guard, and California Department of Fish and Game will return this evening during high tide to complete the removal of the remaining hull of the boat that grounded along the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge. Earlier today with higher tides, the contractor used a larger crane and barge this morning, and crews successfully removed three out of five tanks and the engine as well as parts of the hull. About 20 percent of the boat is still wedged in the mud under the bridge.

Caltrans will close the right lane of westbound 92 on the bridge for a half mile in order for crews to work beginning at 6 p.m. tonight. Two lanes will remain open on the westbound bridge.

Caltrans issued an emergency contract on Friday to remove the damaged boat and to repair the chipped concrete on the bridge rail. Flatiron Construction repaired the rail on Saturday while Vortex Marine Construction removed two-thirds of the boat from the water using a barge and crane on Saturday and Sunday.

Coast Guard, California Department of Fish and Game and other environmental agencies are monitoring any potential fuel release during the removal operations. Presently, there are booms around the boat to prevent spills and any minor amount of remaining fuel that was released when the engine was removed was contained and recovered within booms that surround the boat.

Caltrans engineers have found some cosmetic damage to the underside of the bridge and the contractor will need to repair those chipped sections. There is no structural damage. Light poles that were sheared off on Tuesday will be replaced at a future date when materials are available.

On Tuesday evening, the fishing vessel "Big Timber" lost propulsion and ran aground after colliding with the bridge during a storm that brought high winds and heavy seas to the bay. Two crew members aboard were rescued by the Coast Guard and the other crew member climbed onto the bridge after the vessel struck it.

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